

Saipan Tribune

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I N S I D E

Around the CNMI

Funding OK'd for fishing derby, JSA, Lib Day

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation passed on Friday an appropriation measure dividing \$165,000 among two major events and the Junior Statesmen of America Program.

Members of the local delegation approved \$40,000 for the 20th Saipan International Fishing Derby, \$50,000 to subsidize local students' participation in the JSA program, and \$75,000 for the 2004 Liberation Day festivities.

The appropriation measure or House Local Bill 14-9, offered by Rep. Arnold I. Palacios, was unanimously supported by SNILD members during a session Friday afternoon.

Prior to the bill's passage, SNILD members listened to Insular Affairs Field Rep. Jeff Schorr and JSA Program contact person Karen Prosser elaborate on the summer school program, which provides students across the nation with the opportunity to participate in political activities.

The students are sent to Northwestern, Princeton, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, or George-

town for the summer to learn more about responsible leadership in a democratic society.

SNILD members Speaker Benigno R. Fitial and Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez, whose children have participated in the JSA program, testified that the experience has proved fruitful to the students.

Fitial, however, asked Schorr and Prosser if the OIA could possibly make the program's thrust more about business rather than politics.

"We don't need any more politicians, we need more [people] in business," said the speaker.

Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider, for his part, requested if the OIA can expand the number of students it can sponsor to participate in the program.

Student participants reportedly need roughly around \$5,000 for the summer-long experience. Yesterday, Prosser sat down with local JSA program applicants to discuss issues on teenage sexuality, gay marriage and mercy killing, as part of the program's political awareness activities. *(Marian A. Maraya)*



Palacios

Delegation passes more appropriation bills

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation adjourned its First Day, First Regular session on Friday with the passage of six local bills, all appropriating funds to different projects within the Third Senatorial District.

Among others, the local delegation approved \$145,000 from the Developer Infrastructure Fund for various road paving in Precinct 1, as proposed under House Local Bill 14-2.

Members also approved HLB 14-3 which allots \$20,345 for road paving and painting of the

San Antonio dispensary. The money is sourced from bingo, batu and cockfighting fees.

Also, SNILD agreed to set aside \$20,000 for the hosting of the CNMI Agricultural Fair set for May 2004 on Saipan, pursuant to HLB 14-4.

The delegation also approved passage of HLB 14-6, which allocates \$20,000 to finance the costs of sending the CNMI Basketball Team to a six-week training in Australia. The training, to be conducted by the Baseball Confederation of Oceania, is reportedly

set for mid-June to the first week of August.

The delegation also okayed HLB 14-9 to finance the Saipan International Fishing Derby, Junior Statesmen of America Program and the Liberation Day festivities.

HLB 14-1, which reappropriates \$110,000 for Capitol Hill park improvements, also saw passage on Friday's session.

In the meantime, the delegation deferred action on three local bills: HLB 14-5, HLB 14-8 and SLB 14-1.

HLB 14-5 sought to identify

funds for the payment of the 30 percent early retirement bonus to eligible persons in the Third Senatorial District who have retired effective Sept. 30, 2005 while HLB 14-8 aims to appropriate \$2 million to supplement the operations of the Water Task Force.

Both bills have been referred to the Ways and Means committee for further review.

SLB 14-1 proposes to assign the chairman of the municipal council as acting mayor in the mayor's absence. *(Marian A. Maraya)*

Two minors charged with theft of vehicle

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Two minors—a 13-year-old and a 15-year-old—were arrested by the Department of Public Safety Thursday morning after allegedly stealing a 1991 Mazda Miata that later overturned during a brief chase in Susupe.

The juveniles were first taken to the Commonwealth Health Center for immediate medical

attention after suffering injuries when their vehicle tipped over near the Tenorio compound, DPS spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said.

According to investigation, law enforcers responded to the Equitable Insurance in Susupe around 11am after receiving reports of theft of vehicle that was stolen from the parking lot.

Later in the afternoon, the owner of the Miata MX5 with

license plate ACR452 reported that he had spotted the vehicle within the Susupe area, heading to the Chalan Kanoa village. Police units responded to the scene but failed to locate the stolen vehicle.

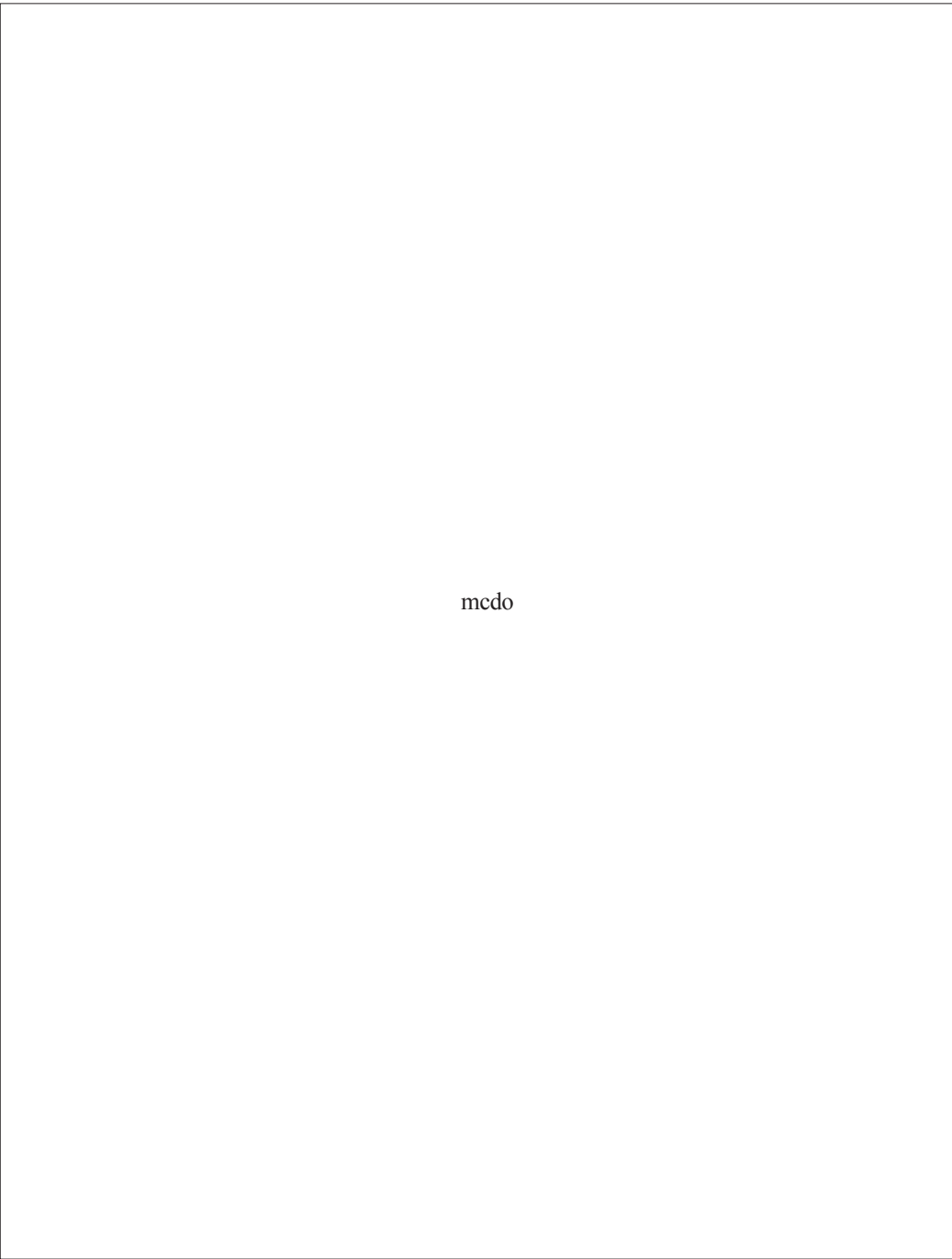
Another call was received around 2:59pm when the owner reported that the vehicle got involved in a car crash at the Pontan Drive in As Perdido. Medics were immediately dispatched to

the scene to help the victims.

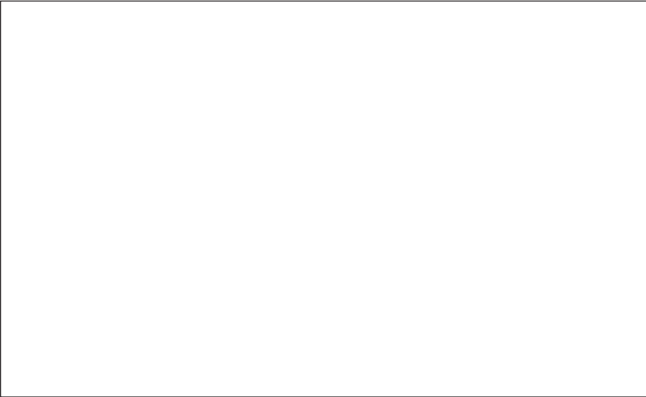
The report added that one suspect sustained minor injuries and was taken to the CH for treatment. He was eventually identified as the driver of the stolen vehicle and was arrested. The other suspect was apprehended at the Ice Berg area after fleeing the scene of accident.

The two are now facing appropriate charges. Both suspects are undergoing interrogation.

URBAN OUTLET
+ORANGE




WEATHER FORECAST




PICTURE TIME: 2:25 A.M., DECEMBER 17, 2003
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.


A monsoon trough extends from 6N130E through a tropical disturbance near 8N145E and finally to near 5N160E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the disturbance are found in the Mariana islands as well as between Yap and Chuuk or between 4N and 16N from 139E to 153E. Just east of the monsoon trough, a surface trough of low pressure continues to near the equator at 168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing north and east of the trough or within 100 miles either side of a line from 9N160E to the equator at 173E, including Kosrae. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across portions of the Marshall islands, between 4N and 16N from 170E to 180.




SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.
Temperature: Lows near 78. Highs near 86.



GUAM AND ROTA
Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers.
Temperature: Lows near 78. Highs near 86.




PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.




POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10 kt.




YAP AND ULITHI
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.






















KOSRAE
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Southeast at 10 kt.



CHUUK
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers with a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.



MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
 Auckland	Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)
 Beijing	Sunny	44F (7C)	26F (-3C)
 Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	61F (16C)
 Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	72F (22C)
 London, England	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)
 Los Angeles	Cloudy	69F (21C)	51F (11C)
 Manila	Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)
 Melbourne	Sunny	73F (23C)	54F (12C)
 Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	75F (24C)
 New York, NY	Cloudy	52F (11C)	48F (9C)
 Osaka	Rain	54F (12C)	46F (8C)
 Paris	Cloudy	53F (12C)	41F (5C)
 Pusan	Rain	58F (14C)	43F (6C)
 Rome	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	39F (4C)
 Salem, Oregon	Rain	54F (12C)	38F (3C)
 San Francisco	Sunny	64F (18C)	47F (5C)
 Seoul	Rain	52F (11C)	45F (7C)
 Tokyo	Rain	55F (13C)	49F (9C)
 Washington, DC	Cloudy	60F (16C)	48F (9C)

Guerrero: Yangetmai has the right to question Teacher Rep poll result

Board of Education member Herman Guerrero commented yesterday that Marianas High School teacher James Yangetmai has the prerogative to question the results of the recently concluded Teacher Representative election, which the Association of Commonwealth Teacher candidate lost to Kagman High School teacher Ambrose Ben-



Guerrero

nett. “Anyone [who] is running can always question [the election result]. I think they [administration] need to ensure whether he has valid points or not. If it’s not valid, then at least you settle the issue. And there’s no cloud hanging over the whole process. “It’s a democratic process. People who lose sometimes ask or think there are discrepancies or procedures [that were] not followed. If that is the case then the people that are conducting the election needs to refute them and say that this is what we did, and this the process and the procedures,” said the official, who recently lost the BOE chairmanship to Roman Benavente. Yangetmai, who lagged behind Bennett by 16 votes in Monday’s poll, hinted of possible vote manipulation, casting

doubts on the election’s credibility. ACT claimed the process was not valid and fair, as it allegedly lacked transparency. The group raised the absence of its own representative at the polling center. “I guess in any election, there’s a need to be clear on the process and procedures. If the one who lost is questioning the validity of the election then perhaps they need to revisit [the issue] and make sure there’s no doubt that what they certified is true and correct. The process has to be followed and it has to be transparent so nobody can question it,” insisted Guerrero, who called on House legislators yesterday. The BOE member representing Saipan was also curious over the dismal turnout in Monday’s election.

“When you only have 28 percent [of] eligible voters voting, that’s an extremely low turnout. With this kind of turnout, there’s no clear mandate from the teachers. So it’s questionable. One can raise the question why you don’t have many who voted? There’s a lot of questions why,” he asserted.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta proclaimed Bennett’s victory on Tuesday, a day after the Teacher Representative poll was held here Monday and simultaneously on Rota and Tinian. The chief executive stressed that teacher representation in the BOE is constitutionally mandated. He said that concerns raised over the selection has prompted his office to hold the election so that all public school teachers in the CNMI could choose a representative that would truly represent them. Babauta credited the Public School System, the BOE, the

PSS legal counsel, the Attorney General’s Office and the administration for putting together a fair and objective selection process. Of the 500 full-time teachers who were eligible to vote, Babauta confirmed that only 142 teachers or 28 percent cast their votes. He lamented the minimal participation. According to the breakdown, Yangetmai garnered 62 votes while Bennett gained 78 votes. Two ballots were reportedly cast without votes. Babauta explained that only full time teachers were eligible to vote in this election, quoting PSS’ definition of full time teachers as any person who is employed by the Public School System and has the primary responsibility for the education, instruction or provides related services for one or more students. *(Marian A. Maraya)*

Paras signs payment schedule with CHC

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Paras Enterprises president Juan T. Guerrero has signed a payment schedule agreement with the Department of Public Health only last week. Earlier, Paras legal counsel Mark Smith clarified that no agreement had been reached yet as of Jan. 8 as previously agreed by both parties. Guerrero said yesterday that Paras signed the payment schedule only last Jan. 14. On January 16, he said Paras received an additional \$100,000 payment from DPH. Based on the schedule, the department will give another payment of \$80,000 to Paras on Jan. 30 and some \$50,000 on Feb. 13. Guerrero said Paras and DPH continue to negotiate for the \$50,000 billing. “We have submitted our billing for \$50,000. I don’t know why they’re disputing our billing now when in the last six years,

they never did,” said Guerrero. He said Paras submitted \$248,000 billing to DPH as of Jan. 7, 2004. Based on the schedule, the DPH only acknowledged some \$230,000. “There is some flexibility but we’ll still pursue what is really due us,” said Guerrero, adding that the department itself is charging Paras some \$11,000 for outstanding hospital bills. This amount would be assessed against the last payment to Paras. “We’ll settle that but I’m not really sure how much we owe them so we have to discuss that,” he said. Guerrero also clarified that he has not signed any expiration transfer agreement with the department, which would “legalize” the transfer of Paras employees to the Commonwealth Health Center. Some authorities, however, said that a consensual transfer agreement with Paras is no longer need-

ed since its contracts with employees provide that their termination of employment goes with Paras’ contract termination with CHC. Both parties have agreed to finalize their payment schedule in view of the DPH’ shift to direct hiring of nursing staff effective Jan. 1, 2004. Paras and other agencies’ contracts with CHC ended on Dec. 31, 2003 but transfer negotiations dragged along pending the settlement of the government’s debt with the companies and the lack of funded FTEs or positions at the department. On Jan. 2, Finance released \$100,000 each to Paras and Saipan Employment Agency Services as partial payment. The government terminated its contracts with agencies on the belief that direct hiring would result in better delivery of health care and boost employee morale. The direct hiring aims to implement a uniform pay for all nursing staff.

DEQ heightens illegal dumping campaign

The Division of Environmental Quality warned that it would impose a fine on anyone caught illegally dumping trash on the islands. DEQ director John I. Castro Jr. urged the public to respect the no littering signs the agency has installed at beach parks and other areas. “We will assess a fine. Our regulations allow us to impose up to \$25,000 per day of violation,” Castro said. The DEQ hopes that the move will deter the public from illegally disposing of trash and household wastes. Castro said trash should be disposed of at the Lower Base

Refuse Transfer Station or the Marpi landfill. “Help us. It’s not just the DEQ’s job to keep Saipan beautiful but it’s also the public’s responsibility,” Castro added. The Environmental Interagency Cleanup Operation Team, of which DEQ is a member, and volunteers from non-profit group MOVER recently conducted an emergency cleanup in Garapan’s Makaka beach site, which had deteriorated due to illegal dumping. According to EICOT chairman Benny Pangelinan, people just ignored the DEQ’s no-littering sign at the site. *(John Ravelo)*

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Opinion

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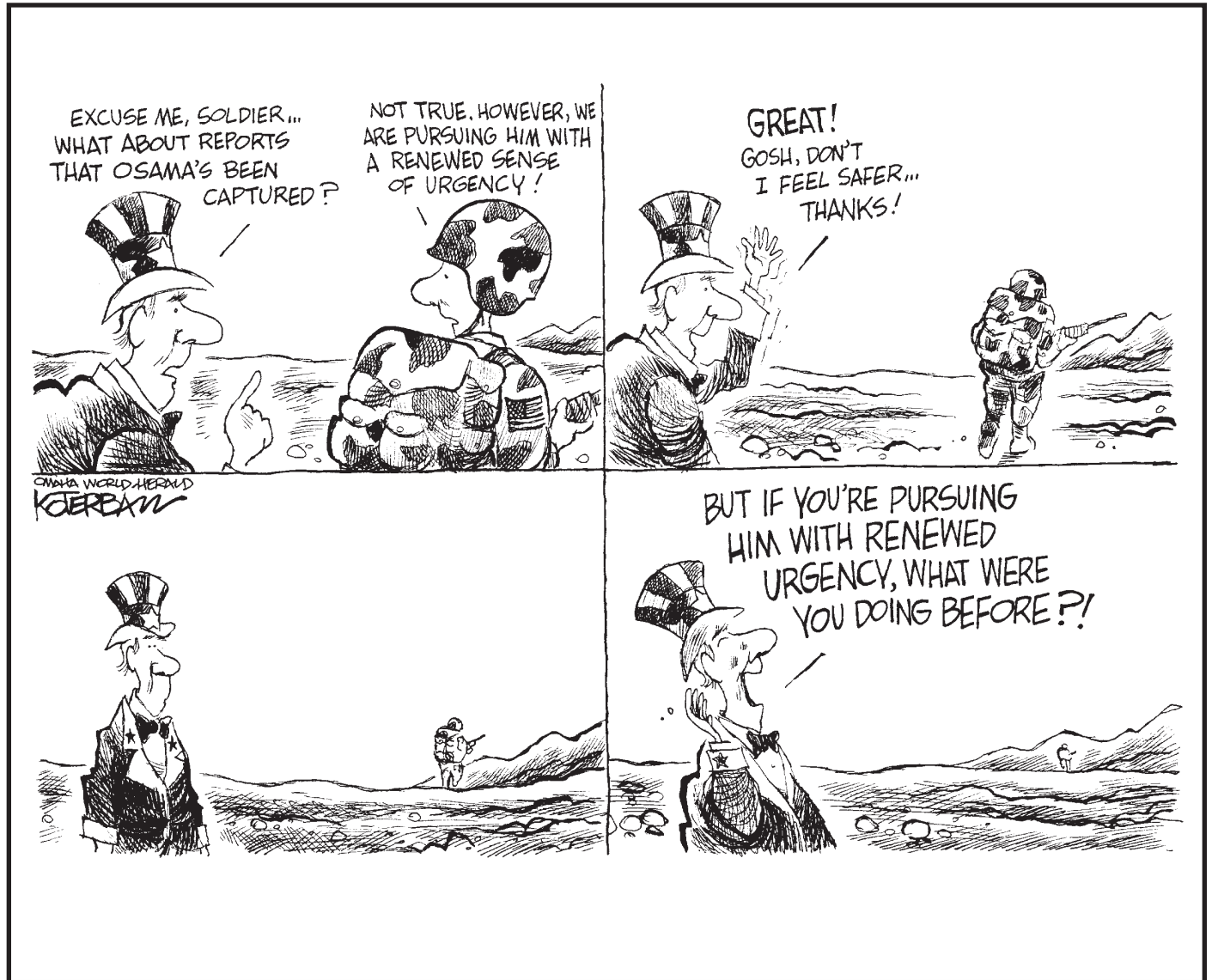
3/11

The Bush administration's clumsy diplomacy and its critics' hyperbolic charges of "unilateralism" sometimes obscure the fact that the United States has had true and valuable allies in the war on terrorism. Thursday one of the best of those, Spain, suffered a blow as shocking and as terrible as any the enemy has landed since Sept. 11, 2001. Authorities said that more than 190 people were killed and more than 1,200 injured when 10 backpacks crammed with compressed dynamite exploded on four trains in Madrid at the height of the morning rush hour. It remained unclear Thursday night who was responsible; police initially blamed the Basque ETA organization but later discovered evidence pointing to al-Qaida. Either way, as Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar put it, "March 11, 2004, has taken its place in the history of infamy."

Aznar, who is to leave office after an election scheduled for Sunday, has done as much as any foreign leader to support President Bush's consecutive campaigns against al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein during the past two years. Toughened by Spain's long fight against ETA, the Spanish leader understood better than most European leaders the threat posed by terrorists to modern democracies. Spain was instrumental in locating and capturing al-Qaida operatives, including several on its territory. And Spanish troops joined U.S. forces in Iraq last year as Aznar grittily joined with Britain's Tony Blair in standing by Bush, despite the opposition of most of the Spanish public. His strong leadership paid off. Though Spanish troops have suffered painful casualties, Aznar's party was favored to win the upcoming elections over an opposition that favored withdrawing from Iraq.

The terrorists who struck Thursday, whether from ETA or al-Qaida, no doubt hoped to punish Aznar for his firmness and persuade Spaniards to abandon his policies. "This is part of settling old accounts with Spain, the crusader, and America's ally in its war against Islam," said a purported al-Qaida statement received by an Arabic newspaper. But the early signs were that the crime would rally support across Europe for Spain, and for resoluteness in an ongoing war. "Democracies must be—and will be—united in combating this without weakness," said French President Jacques Chirac. The horror of Madrid only confirms that a broad and determined alliance is the only answer to terrorism. It reminds us that the United States neither fights, nor suffers, alone.

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Parents work so teens can spend

By JERRY ZEZIMA

Special to The Stamford Advocate

As a man with two daughters who made it through their teenage years without, miraculously, bankrupting their mother and me, although there was rarely enough cash left over to blow on extravagant luxuries such as food and shelter, I have often said that when your children selfishly insist on eating every day, money comes in handy.

Now I know why. According to a story in the Journal of Neuroscience, there is a significant difference in the developing teenage brain and the mature brain of an adult when faced with the opportunity to make money.

Scientists found that as adults worked to make money in a research task, they experienced an increase in blood flow in the nucleus accumbens, a region deep in the middle of the brain. In contrast, adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 who performed the same research task had half the blood flow and volume in this region. "It tells us that teenagers love stuff, but aren't as willing to get off the couch to get it as adults are," said James Bjork, one of the scientists who conducted the study.

I don't want to disparage the scientists or minimize their research, but any parent who now has or has ever had a teenager could have told them that.

Besides, I don't think this study gives teens enough credit for having the brainpower to obtain the money they need for the stuff they love.

In fact, I'll go even further and say that it's the teenagers who are enterprising and the adults who are lazy.

Using my own seven-year research (my daughters, who are 23 and 21, were in the five-year range of 12-17, with two additional years to account for the age difference), I can say unequivocally that the increased blood flow in the nucleus accumbens region of the adult brain occurs as the result of constant demands by teenagers for money, leading to a common medical condition in parents known as high blood pressure.

This has a profound effect on the thought processes of parents, who are eventually rendered helpless, and therefore lazy, in the face of such relentless assaults. The fol-

lowing typical conversation serves as an example.

Mother (standing in the kitchen): Your daughter wanted 50 bucks yesterday to get her hair cut.

Father: My daughter? She's yours, too. Maybe that's why she hit me up for 30 bucks so she could go to the mall.

Mother: You're too easy.

Father: Me? You're the one who got her into the shopping habit.

Mother: It's about time we put our feet down.

Father: You're right. This kid must think we're made of money.

Mother: From now on, we have to learn how to say no.

Teenager (yelling from the couch): I need a new backpack to carry my books or I'm gonna flunk out of school.

Mother (rushing into the family room): Sure, honey.

Father (taking out his wallet): How much do you need?

In fairness to teens, they can't get jobs until they turn 16, which is why I tried for so many years, starting when my kids were in elementary school, to get the child labor laws repealed. Now it's too late. Besides, even if teenagers do get jobs, they need transportation, which means: (a) you have to buy them a car or (b) they have to use yours. Either way, with gas and insurance costs, you're out even more money.

Eventually, teenagers get off the couch so they can go places to spend the money their parents have given them. The parents, in turn, get older and more tired from working so hard to make the money their teenagers need. This is why parents spend an increasing amount of time on the couch, where they usually fall asleep each night and miss not only the 11 o'clock news, but also their teenagers, who have come in late and can't get up in the morning and spend a large portion of their precious little time at home on the couch, thus leading their parents to believe, wrongly, that teenagers are lazy.

I guess those scientists don't have kids.

And now, to the parents of teenagers, I will report the final and most important part of my research: If you think your money supply is low and your blood pressure is high now, just wait until they go to college.

Zezima will write this column until he can afford to stop.

Fresh air for stale structures

By **EDWARD MAZRIA**

Special to the Los Angeles Times

In our quest to dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions and lessen our dependence on fossil fuels, we have contented ourselves by pointing a finger at gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles. And in doing so we have overlooked the biggest source of emissions and energy consumption both in this country and around the globe: architecture.

If you took all sport utility vehicles off the road tomorrow and replaced them with hybrids, the effect on energy use and global warming would be minimal. The entire fleet of SUVs, minivans and light-duty trucks in this country accounts for only 6.5 percent of the total U.S. energy consumed each year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And although that doesn't mean we should abandon efforts to produce more efficient, environmentally friendly SUVs, it does illustrate a huge blind spot in U.S. energy consciousness.

Buildings and their construction account for nearly half of all the greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumed in this country each year. Globally, the percentage is even greater. And architects hold the key to turning down the global thermostat.

The reason for this is quite simple. Although our country's fleet of autos and light trucks could turn over within about 12 years and be replaced by more efficiently run vehicles, buildings have a lifespan (and energy consumption and emissions pattern) of 50 to 100 years.

The problem is that buildings consume energy mainly in the form of burning oil, natural gas and coal, and U.S. oil and gas production has been in decline since the 1970s. Global oil and natural gas reserves are limited; most of these remaining reserves are in a small area stretching from Saudi Arabia to Siberia, an unstable part of the world. This leaves coal. The United States, Russia, China, Australia and India have plenty of it, and it is cheap—and dirty. Clean coal technologies are decades away—as is capturing and storing carbon dioxide—and they are costly.

Architects know that buildings can be designed to require less than half the energy of today's average U.S. building, with no additional cost. This is accomplished through proper siting, building form, material selection and glass properties and location and by incorporating day-lighting strategies and natural heating, cooling and ventilation.

To achieve such a reduction, government at all levels must pass laws that all major governmental building renovation and new building projects be designed to use half the energy now typically consumed. When these standards are in widespread use, building codes for all housing developments and commercial, institutional and multifamily buildings can be changed to the standard in place for government buildings.

With about 5 billion square feet of new construction and 5 billion square feet of renovation taking place in the United States each year, the potential for reducing energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions is enormous. This would put the United States well on its way toward meeting its international obligations and demonstrate a way for developing nations to cut emissions without sacrificing economic growth.

There is no short-term or long-term greenhouse gas solution possible without involving the architectural and building communities. With abrupt rather than gradual climate change looming as a possibility, quickly engaging this sector becomes critical.

Mazria is an architect in Santa Fe, N.M. He is author of "The Passive Solar Energy Book" (Rodale Press, 1979).



By **RUTH L. TIGHE**

The importance of recording history, of writing and publishing firsthand accounts of historical events as—or shortly after—they occur is exemplified by the book "An Honorable Accord," written by Howard Willens and Deanne Siemer. The "Honorable Accord" of the title is the CNMI's Covenant, and the book records, in a fair amount of detail, the debate, discussions, maneuvers, manipulations, conflicts and compromises that were involved in creating the document that defines the relationship between the CNMI and the U.S.

One of the issues addressed in the book is representation of the new Commonwealth in Washington, D.C. The Covenant provides for a "representative" to the U.S. rather than the non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress that all of the other insular entities have.

Some people appear to believe that the position of an elected Washington Representative was deliberately chosen by the CNMI to distinguish it from the other entities. The Washington Rep was a distinctive feature—somewhat like an ambassador, with both submitting their credentials to the State Department—that emphasized the uniqueness of the CNMI's relationship to the U.S. Giving up that distinction would be harmful, according to their beliefs, since it would result in the CNMI looking more like all the rest of the entities. It is, I confess, a belief that I also have held.

A reading of Willens and Siemer's book, however, reveals that such was not the case. The desire for a non-voting delegate was there from the very beginning. Even sharing Guam's delegate was discussed. But the U.S. was adamant. The decision to afford the CNMI representation by an "agent" (rather than a commissioner) was, in fact, a compromise, not the CNMI preference.

If it weren't for recorded history, the truth of the matter might have remained in question. But with the testimony offered by Willens' book, there can be no doubt. The desire for a non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress, as present Washington Rep Pete A. Tenorio keeps insisting, has been there from the very beginning.

Speaking of negotiations with the powers-that-be in Washington, D.C., isn't it interesting that, months after the fact, all sorts of objections and protests are being voiced at the CNMI's awarding a very sizeable contract to Danny Aranza, former Director of the U.S. Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs? Members of both the CNMI House and Senate, as well as Board of Education officials, have gone on record this past week to say that the contract awarded to Aranza's firm for preparing the CNMI's homeland security strategic plan was an unnecessary and wasteful expenditure of funds.

It would appear that the purpose of this belated outcry is to placate and appease the U.S. House leadership, which, it is rumored, was not at all inclined to consider the bill granting the CNMI a non-voting delegate with any sympathy—despite the supportive-seeming committee hearing—because of the continuing association of Aranza *et al.* with the CNMI administration.

Whether this belated show of anti-Aranza posture will have any effect remains to be seen.

At the risk of being called a heretic, a traitor, or worse, I can't help but ask why only one party to the "liberation" of Saipan will be so extravagantly honored during the celebration of the 60th anniversary of its occurrence. Being feted are the U.S. military who, during the invasion, fought and killed thousands of Japanese soldiers.

Particularly since the Japanese are no longer the enemy but the mainstay of the CNMI tourist industry, one would think that every effort would be made to temper, soften, deflect this slaughter and any remaining evidence thereof. Instead, 60 years later, as much of the militarism as can still be mustered will be featured—and flaunted—not only here in the CNMI, but worldwide. And as star feature of this glorification of war, Paul Tibbets Jr., pilot of the plane that dropped the bomb that annihilated millions of innocent

Amid the laughter, the need for tears

By **MARTHA MCNEIL HAMILTON**

The Washington Post

I've been to a lot of hilarious funerals and memorial services in the past year.

They were for good friends and former colleagues who were remembered with deep affection and many reminders of the reasons they were beloved.

But after one such service I came home and cried for hours until I finally felt some relief from my grief. The memorial service had been beautiful. Friends and family members spoke, reminding us of the wonderful, maddening, inspirational and idiosyncratic individual we had lost. Yet the service left me unsatisfied. It wasn't until I came home that I felt able to truly grieve at the unfairness of the loss.

We've become too urbane in the face of death. I like a good story as much as anyone, and I reveled in hearing what was really a superb collection of extraordinarily funny recollections. But what was missing was the collective wail that the death of a wonderful individual should have set off.

There were moments, brief moments, when speakers focused on solemnity and pain. And all spoke with love. Still, my sense was that there was a crowd of very accomplished, very funny, very self-consciously

Japanese civilians, is slated to be guest speaker.

And what of the Chamorros and Carolinians, whose homes and businesses were destroyed in the war, whose ranks were also decimated, who were "liberated" only to be placed in internment camps? Should not those who survived be equally honored? Shouldn't the caves where they sought refuge—in which some were trapped and died—also be memorialized?

How much more humane, healing, compassionate, merciful, uplifting, it would have been if the 60th, and indeed the 50th before it, were focused on peace, on forgiveness, on forging cooperation and understanding rather than emphasizing war, and killing and weapons of destruction. There is too much war in the world. So-called "terrorism" notwithstanding, the CNMI had an opportunity to promote peace and peaceful co-existence. Too bad it hasn't.

Short takes:

Anyone who has encountered a non-responsive 800 number should call either consumer counsel Brian Caldwell at the Attorney General's office (664-2341), director of the Telecommunications Committee Adam Turner (664-2209) or Verizon general manager Anthony Mosley (234-6100).

Mosley explained earlier this week, at a Telecommunications Committee meeting, that access to 800 numbers is determined by those organizations and companies who hold them, and the holders are not required to make 800 numbers universally available. But if the 800 number is not available only because the holder is unaware that the CNMI is part of the U.S. system, Mosley said Verizon would notify the holder of the error.

One of the most significant archaeological sites on Saipan is said to be in, on, and around the "footprint" of a hotel once proposed for the Nakamoto site in Garapan. Now the CNMI government is proposing to construct an artificial wetland on the site as a means of treating rain run-off from the Garapan Revitalization project. Said CIP Coordinator Chuck Jordan on MCV last night, "The most cost-effective way of treating the water is through a reconstructed wetlands."

Let us hope the site's artifacts are properly identified and protected—or removed—before being inundated.

And speaking of water: to all those who wrote to say that ice and steam are also water, I beg to differ. They are all forms of H₂O. But the word water refers only to the liquid manifestation, as any dictionary will confirm.

Would it speed up the demise of the destructive scarlet gourd vines on island if schools took on as science projects the breeding of the leaf-mining weevils that eat the vines?

My arithmetic handicap popped up again in last week's column. Aranza wasn't paid \$600,000. He was paid only (!) \$400,000—\$200,000 for the original contract, and \$200,000 more through an amendment.

Did anyone note the Nissan ad in the "Pacific Daily News" last week? It bragged about "moving mountains of dirt to create acres of customer parking and new and used car display." Well, perhaps Guam has enough land to afford acres of paving, but even so, I wouldn't brag about it. Paving adds to the heat sink, and in replacing vegetation, also adds to air pollution.

Technically speaking, the settlement agreement between the Marine Revitalization Corporation, Anthony Pellegrino and the CNMI government is dead, because the agreement itself says, "Absent enactment of a public law by the 13th CNMI Legislature within four months of the execution of this Settlement Agreement [which did not happen], there is no Settlement Agreement, and the arbitration shall resume."

Arbitration has not resumed, though a status conference is scheduled for some time next month.

Last but not least: according to the coconut wireless, a number of would-be TESOL students feel deprived because the Canadian Institute of English course has, apparently, been canceled. I would have thought they'd feel a great deal more deprived once they realized that their \$650 certificate bought them only a "certificate [that] can stand alone if you wish to teach volunteer classes or privately from your home"—to quote from its website "you asked" feature. (See "Will my certificate be recognized?" at <http://www.cie.ca/youasked.htm>).

sophisticated people trying to keep pain at bay. And we should have let it in the door. We should have acknowledged it.

There's a good reason we have formalized rituals for grieving. At a traditional funeral or memorial service, though there may be laughs during the eulogy and remembrances, most of the service is sad. Beautiful, evocative music. Prayers and scriptural reminders of both inescapable mortality and hoped-for immortality. The quiet ushering in and out of family.

More and more the services I attend, except for much older friends and family, depart from that script for something more personal and less solemn. In some ways, it makes for a wonderful remembrance of the friend or relative who is lost. But often it feels as if something is missing.

It's not that no one was weeping at the services I attended. Many people were. But we were weeping silently and individually, as if it weren't on the agenda. I reached a knuckle up to stop a tear, pretending to scratch my cheek. A few weeks after one such occasion, I said to another friend of the deceased, "I didn't see you at the memorial service."

"I was there," he said. "But I left immediately after, because I was crying, and it didn't seem to be that type of occasion."

Celebrating life is wonderful. But let's not forget to mourn death.

It hurts.

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3 men arrested for alleged assault

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO
REPORTER

Authorities arrested Monday night three men who have been a subject of intensive investigations by law enforcers since November 2003 when a 43-year-old man lodged a complaint against them.

Police department spokesperson Sgt. Tom Blas Jr. said Martin F. Borja, 38; Chris W. Taimanglo, 20; and William M. Faisao, 19, were arrested based on the arrest warrants issued against them by Judge Juan Lizama.

Blas said COPPS officers Jesse Seman and Sandy Hambros arrested the three suspects in connection with a Nov. 16, 2003, assault case lodged by Saburo Stewart, 43.

Lizama issued the warrants after the police released the results of its investigation on the case. The officers immediately served the warrants to the suspects. All three were brought to the Adult Correctional facility in Susupe where they were booked and detained pending bail hearing.

The investigation report showed that the police department received a call for assistance around 1:28am of Nov. 16, 2003, due to a disturbance in the house of Stewart in Kagman III area. Medics were also dispatched due to injuries sustained by the victim.

According to the report, the victim and two of the three suspects were involved in a fight outside the victim's house. During the squabble, the suspects used rocks, a machete, and a baseball bat to allegedly attack the victim, causing serious injuries.

Stewart reportedly sustained lacerations on the back, legs, and arms, as well as other cuts and bruises on his body.

After the investigation, probers determined the culpability of the three suspects and asked that arrest warrants be issued against them.

The suspects are now facing disturbing the peace, assault and battery, assault with dangerous weapons, and criminal mischief charges.

Taiwanese boat seized off New Caledonia

A Taiwanese fishing boat has been intercepted south of New Caledonia for fishing illegally.

The French high commission in the New Caledonia capitol of Noumea says the ship had been spotted by a French surveillance aircraft and an inspection showed it carried dozens of tons of fresh and frozen fish.

The interception comes just days after the captain of another Taiwanese fishing boat was jailed for six months and fined almost US\$200,000 for fishing illegally. (RNZI/PIR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

Saipan Southern High School students gather around Gov. Juan N. Babauta during the chief executive's recent visit at the campus, in line with the administration's education program. Babauta has been putting emphasis on public education as an important tool in the eventual recovery of the local economy.

MPLA board in limbo due to lack of quorum

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

The lack of a quorum on the Board of Directors of the Marianas Public Lands Authority is stymieing efforts to move ahead on critical projects, including 36 new offers for land compensation that require the board's approval.

Only two members remain on the Board—chairperson, Ana Demapan-Castro and vice chairman Manny Villagomez—following the resignation of a member and term expiration of another.

Member Pedro M. Atalig resigned from the board effective Jan. 1, 2004, while member

Pedro Igitol's term expired on Dec. 31, 2003.

The board is composed of five seats, with one representative each from Tinian and Rota and three from Saipan. The CNMI Constitution also provides that one of the directors should be of Carolinian descent, while another should represent women.

At the moment, Demapan-Castro represents Saipan and the women's sector, while Villagomez represents Tinian. This means nobody is representing Rota, the Carolinians, and two seats for Saipan.

This, even as the MPLA has already readied 36 new offers for land compensation that re-

quire the board's approval.

"We have to get the board's approval before we can make the offer but the board can't possibly meet right now for lack of quorum," said MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider.

The board normally holds a regular meeting on the third Thursday of the month.

Hofschneider said that some names have been floated for appointment by the governor to the board. He declined to identify them.

Meantime, he said that 38 landowners have accepted the MPLA's initial offers and are like likely to get their compensation within the month.

"Once Finance puts the

money in MPLA's special account, we can start cutting checks," he said.

Hofschneider said that MPLA is offering "just and fair" compensation to landowners.

The MPLA board approved 75 folders for immediate land compensation last month. This came soon after the CNMI government floated a \$40-million bond, with the proceeds to be used primarily to settle the longstanding land claims by individuals against the government. The first batch of claims included acquisition of rights-of-way.

The Land Compensation Act mandates the government to prioritize the payment for lands used for rights-of-way, then

ponding basins, and later wetlands and other claims.

The payment to landowners is based on the valuation at the time of taking by the Commonwealth.

The MPLA has listed some 120 eligible land claimants in the CNMI.

Of the \$40-million bond, only about \$27 million will be used for land compensation, as \$11 million has been allotted to fund a pending prison project. The bond's Hawaii-based underwriter also deducted \$1.5 million from the total amount for cost of the bond issuance.

The government is given 30 years to pay off the loan at an annual interest of 6.75 percent.

cars unlimited
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Good Housekeeping

Business

World

Dollars & Sense

Reports offer signs of hope on jobs front

By **SETH SUTEL**
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—A pair of economic reports released Thursday signaled hope that the long dry spell in hiring could be easing, but economists remained cautious about the prospects of a full recovery in the job market. Another report showed a spike in energy prices.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that the number of new claims for unemployment benefits fell last week for the third consecutive week, driving jobless claims down to their lowest level in more than three years.

The number of laid-off workers seeking jobless benefits fell by 6,000 to 336,000, indicating that the pace of job cuts is slowing. Economists have been hoping that that trend will indicate more hiring in the future, but so far that has yet to pan out.

David Wyss, chief economist for Standard & Poors, called the report encouraging but stopped short of saying that the job market was on the mend. "People aren't getting laid off, but they also aren't getting hired," he said.

Separately, a private research group in New York called the Conference Board reported that its forward-looking

barometer of economic activity held steady in February, and that an indicator of current economic activity rose.

Taken together, the reports suggest that the current growth in the economy will lead to job creation quite soon, perhaps in the next month or two, according to Ken Goldstein, an economist at the Conference Board.

The group's Composite Index of Leading Economic Indicators, a forecast of economic activity over the next three to six months, held steady from January at 115.1 following a gain of 0.4 percent in January.

Economists were somewhat disappoint-

ed in the flat reading since it followed 10 consecutive months of gains in the index, a feat that has happened only two other times in the last 30 years, Goldstein said.

The group also reported that its coincident index, a snapshot of the current state of the economy, rose by 0.3 percent in February, following a downwardly revised 0.1 percent gain in each of the prior two months.

Under normal circumstances, the signs of growth seen so far in the economy would have already led to job growth, Goldstein said. The lag between recovery in the economy and a corresponding improvement in em-

ployment has been "longer than we're used to," Goldstein said.

He said the consistent strength in the leading indicators index is consistent with continued economic growth of about 5 percent. "The leading indicators tell us that we're not losing momentum," Goldstein said. "It's hard to see how we can keep that up without job growth."

The leading indicators index combines 10 various measures of economic activity, including money supply, manufacturing hours and new orders for consumer goods and materials. The Conference Board reported that six of those 10 measurements increased in February.



WITHDRAWN

Bottles of Dasani water, a product from Coca-Cola, on sale in London, Friday March 19, 2004. The Coca-Cola Co. said Friday it is withdrawing its Dasani bottled water from sale in Britain after finding that samples contained higher than permitted levels of the chemical bromate. A Coca-Cola spokesman said the voluntary withdrawal was a precautionary measure. Only Britain was affected.

EU set to sanction Microsoft in Europe

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—The European Union announced its intention Thursday to sanction Microsoft Corp. after the software giant balked at demands that could have prevented it from adding new features to future versions of Windows—a restriction it avoided in the landmark U.S. antitrust case.

Frenzied settlement talks that accelerated this week with the arrival of Microsoft chief executive Steve Ballmer in Brussels collapsed over the EU's insistence on a broad deal in exchange for allowing Microsoft to avoid being found guilty of monopolistic behavior.

EU Competition Commissioner Mario Monti said he would now proceed with a precedent-setting ruling against the world's largest software company on Wednesday. The EU also plans to hit Microsoft with a fine expected to reach hundreds of millions of dollars.

"We made substantial progress to-

ward resolving the problems that had arisen in the past, but we were unable to agree on commitments for future conduct," Monti said. "It was impossible to achieve a satisfactory result in terms of setting a precedent."

Hours later, Ballmer said he believed the issues in the current case—involving digital media players and the server software market—had been resolved.

"But we were unable to agree on principles for new issues that could arise in the future," he said in a statement.

Microsoft lawyers said the company would appeal any negative decision to European courts.

An EU order could force Microsoft to make costly changes in its software—potentially on a global scale—in a matter of months unless it wins a suspension from the court pending appeal, which can take years.

Spring cleaning for the credit cards

By **DON OLDENBURG**
THE WASHINGTON POST

every so often to keep it active and pay off the balance every month."

Instead, get rid of the store credit cards, which tend to charge higher interest rates and aren't as versatile as major credit cards. "But don't close them all at once," warns Tehan. That can throw off your balance owed/credit available ratio on your credit report. "You're going to look like you're carrying a lot more debt than you really are. And if somebody sees that you closed a whole bunch of cards at once, it sends up a red flag and could look a little funky to a mortgage broker or lender."

Tehan recommends closing only one or two cards a month. The best practice is to send the credit card company a certified cancellation letter with return receipt to verify delivery. Explain that your card has a zero balance and you want to cancel it. Ask that the cancellation report it sends to the major credit bureaus state that the card was "closed by the consumer" and request written confirmation.

"The last thing you want on your credit report is some screw-up where the credit card company is saying they closed the card," he says. "That looks really bad."

If you don't get confirmation within 10 days, follow up with a phone call, says Tehan. Thirty days after it's confirmed, get a copy of your credit report "to make sure everything's correct."

CORPORATE Roundup

Smokeless Tobacco antitrust suit settled

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP)—U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Co., the nation's largest maker of smokeless tobacco, has agreed to pay \$200 million and forfeit its cigar business to settle an antitrust lawsuit brought by rival Swedish Match North America.

Separately, the subsidiary of UST Inc. also said it had resolved a lawsuit brought by customers who said they were overcharged. The company said it has taken a \$40 million charge to fulfill the terms of the agreement, which include awarding coupons for reduced-priced products and paying legal fees.

Jurors in Tyco trial begin deliberations

NEW YORK (AP)—Jurors began deliberating Thursday whether two former executives looted more than \$600 million from Tyco International Inc. and used the money to pay for vacation homes, extravagant furnishings, jewelry and a party on a Mediterranean island.

Former Tyco chief executive L. Dennis Kozlowski and former finance chief Mark H. Swartz are both charged with 32 counts of grand larceny, falsifying business records and violating state business laws and face up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

Jurors began their talks after hearing more than five months of arguments and testimony and a morning of instructions from State Supreme Court Justice Michael Obus. The jury ended deliberations Thursday without reaching a verdict and was scheduled to resume on Friday.

Judge: Skilling's assets to stay frozen

HOUSTON (AP)—Former Enron Corp. chief executive Jeffrey Skilling's millions will remain frozen indefinitely, potentially jeopardizing his ability to meet personal expenses and pay his high-powered legal team.

U.S. District Judge Sim Lake ruled late Thursday in favor of the federal government's request to maintain a freeze on more than \$55 million in cash and property. Skilling's lawyers say that comprises all his assets.

The judge rejected Skilling's argument that federal prosecutors wrongly sought to freeze his assets when he

has yet to go to trial, much less be convicted. Trial preparations are expected to be so onerous that Lake last week said he would hold off for several months on setting a trial date.

Ex-Global Crossing officers to settle suit

NEW YORK (AP)—Gary Winnick and other former officers of Global Crossing agreed Friday to pay a combined \$325 million to settle a class action law suit brought by two Ohio pension funds and others who invested in the notorious telecommunications company, according to lawyers for the plaintiffs.

Winnick, the founder and former chairman who sold more than \$700 million worth of Global Crossing stock before the company filed one of the biggest bankruptcy cases in U.S. history, will pay \$55 million of the settlement, according to the law firm Grant & Eisenhofer PLC.

The settlement also includes a \$19.5 million payment from Global Crossing's law firm, Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett LLP, which was not a defendant in the case, but which had been accused of conflicts of interest and neglect in investigating allegations of fraudulent accounting.

United States

Life & Style

By LARRY McSHANE
AP WRITER

For years, the words "Must-See TV" meant Sam and Diane, or Jerry and George, or Ross and Rachel. There's a new member of the club these days: The Donald.

That's billionaire Donald Trump, surfing back into the public consciousness on a wave of publicity from his reality show, "The Apprentice." The real estate developer, owner of high rises and a low profile in recent years, has returned to the A-list.

Trump, now 57, has managed a bold return to the land of bold-faced names. He's working on a new book; Trump recently boasted that he received a \$5 million advance for "Trump: How to Get Rich" (Chapter one: write a book with a \$5 million advance).

He's developing real estate projects in Manhattan, Chicago, Los Angeles—seven new skyscrapers in all. Trump has launched a new line of spring water, modestly named "Trump Ice."

He appeared on the cover of Newsweek, was the subject of a Fortune magazine profile, and is once again in demand by the media: Trump's office claims it fields more than 50 interview requests per day.

Even when he's bad, Trump's good: His ritual dismissal of candidates on the television show—done with a wave of his hand and a quick "You're

fired!"—has given the country a new catchphrase.

Trump, cashing in where Clara "Where's the beef?" Peller did not, has even filed papers to trademark the expression. Last week, nearly 20 million Americans tuned in to hear Trump utter the phrase, making his show No. 6 in the national Nielsen ratings.

"He's had his ups and down," talk show host Larry King said in introducing Trump before a recent appearance. "Now, it's lately been nothing but ups."

An open casting call for the next season of "The Apprentice" drew 2,000 Donald wannabes, with another 11 cities set to host similar events. The tryouts, naturally, were held at the Trump Building in Manhattan.

"It's the hottest thing on television," Trump proclaimed to reporters Thursday, a bit of vintage braggadocio dating back to his meteoric rise in the '80s.

He was approached by "Survivor" creator Mark Burnett with the idea for a Trump-centric reality show. Trump went along with the idea, and a star was reborn.

At this point, it seems there's just one thing troubling Trump: repeated questions about his hair. Is the aerodynamically troubling 'do a toupee? A comb-over?

"I've gotten great reviews, everything's gotten great reviews, except for one thing," he told King. "My hair gets bad reviews."



Billionaire developer Donald Trump, center, signals to those waiting in line at a casting call for the second season of his television show, "The Apprentice," Thursday March, 18, 2004 in New York.

Blair's 'House' flops on book sales chart

NEW YORK (AP)—Jayson Blair and Stephen Glass, two young journalists notorious for fabricating stories, have something else in common: Both have written highly publicized books that few people are buying.

Blair, a former New York Times reporter, received a six-figure advance for "Burning Down My Master's House." Published March 6, the book had an announced first printing of 250,000 and plenty of media coverage, including author interviews with Katie Couric on NBC and Larry King on CNN.

But in its first nine days of publication, the book only sold about 1,400 copies, according to Nielsen BookScan. Figures from Nielsen usually represent about 70 percent of total sales.

"Jayson Blair's book is currently not selling particularly well, but frankly I don't think that comes as much of a surprise, given the amount of ink already spilled on this topic," Daniel Blackman, vice president and general manager of Barnes & Noble.com, said.

"Keep in mind that the audience for this book, are for the most part, the very same readers who've already consumed the extensive Times coverage in the aftermath of the scandal. I think they already know all they need to on the subject."

The book recounts Blair's rise and fall at The New York Times, which



Former New York Times reporter Jayson Blair responds to questions from the audience after reading an excerpt from his book, "Burning Down My Master's House" at a bookstore in New York's Harlem neighborhood, Friday, March 12, 2004.

he left last spring after being accused of plagiarism. A review by the newspaper uncovered errors and fabrications in three dozen stories.

Most critics panned "Burning," with the Los Angeles Times labeling it "self-pitying and unreliable." New York publishers expressed little interest in the book, which was released by the Los Angeles-based New Millennium Press.

'Pee-Wee' pleads guilty to obscenity

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Pee-wee Herman" actor Paul Reubens was sentenced to three years probation Friday after pleading guilty to a misdemeanor obscenity charge involving photographs seized from his erotica collection.

The former star of "Pee-wee's Playhouse" children's TV show will not be allowed unsupervised contact with minors during the probation period.

Under terms of a plea agreement approved by Superior Court Judge Carol H. Rehm, Reubens also agreed to pay a \$100 fine and to enter a counseling program for one year.

Prosecutors dismissed a misdemeanor

charge of child pornography that had carried a maximum sentence of a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

However Reubens, 51, agreed to register as a sex offender for the duration of his probation.

"We view both of these counts equally in terms of serious nature of child pornography," said Eric Moses, a spokesman for the city attorney's office.

The charge resulted from a search of Reubens' home in November 2001. Police seized about 30,000 images from his photography collection and personal computers.

Reubens, who did not appear in court Friday, pleaded guilty through

his attorney to possession of obscene materials with the intent to distribute, and in a Thursday court hearing he acknowledged possessing 170 images of minors engaged in sexual conduct, Moses said.

Evidence seized included images of minors with their genitals exposed, Moses contended.

"That mischaracterizes the art collection seized," Reubens' lawyer, Blair Berk said Friday. "If that means a black-and-white tintype from 1901 with a young man of indeterminate, 17- to 19-year-old age, laying on the beach after having gone skinny-dipping ... then they got it."

FCC cites Stern, Bono for indecency

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal regulators opened a new front in their crack-down on offensive broadcasts Thursday, saying that almost any use of the F-word on over-the-air radio and television would be considered indecent.

The Federal Communications Commission overruled its staff and said an expletive uttered by rock singer Bono on NBC was both indecent and profane. It marked the first time that the FCC cited a four-letter word as profane; the commission previously equated profanity with language challenging God's divinity.

The FCC on Thursday also proposed maximum fines for the broadcast of the Howard Stern radio show and for a program on two Florida radio stations owned by a Clear Channel Communications subsidiary.

Commissioners said they did not propose a fine for Bono's expletive during the 2003 Golden Globe Awards because they had never before said that virtually any use of the F-word violated its rules. The FCC specifically rejected earlier findings that occasional use of the F-word was acceptable.

"Given that today's decision clearly

departs from past precedent in important ways, I could not support a fine retroactively against the parties," said FCC Chairman Michael Powell, who had asked his fellow commissioners to overturn the agency's enforcement bureau's finding.

"Prospectively, parties are on notice that they could now face significant penalties for similar violations," Powell said.

NBC did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment. A publicist for U2 said Bono was in the studio in Ireland and was not immediately available for comment.

Britney Spears suffers knee injury

NEW YORK (AP)—Britney Spears suffered a knee injury during her concert tour, forcing her to cancel a performance Friday night.

The singer hurt herself during a dance routine toward the end of her show Thursday night in Moline, Ill. Spears was singing one of her new songs, "Boom Boom," according to "Entertainment Tonight."

Minutes later, the syndicated television program reported, the 22-year-old pop star reappeared on stage in a white bathrobe and apologized to the audience for not being able to continue. She'd planned two more encore songs.

Spears' label, Jive Records, said in a statement that she'd have to cancel Friday night's concert at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, Ill., in suburban Chicago. Ticket holders were told to keep their tickets until further notice.

About 15,000 fans were expected at Friday's concert, Allstate Arena marketing director Phil Chihoski said. He said the venue hoped Spears would reschedule a performance for sometime in April.

Jive representatives weren't immediately available for comment Friday afternoon.

Spears is in the midst of her "Onyx Hotel Tour," which runs through the summer.

Guitarist gets Rockwalk Award posthumously

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Randy Rhoads, the guitarist behind Ozzy Osbourne's most acclaimed solo work, was posthumously honored with a bronze bust on Hollywood's Rockwalk.

About 200 fans turned out to see the ceremony Thursday and hear from Osbourne himself, who praised Rhoads' virtuoso brand of heavy metal guitar playing.

"I will never forget Randy, he was a small guy with giant talent," Osbourne said. "Not a day goes by that my family doesn't think about him. He will never die in our hearts."

Added wife and manager Sharon Osbourne: "This is a testament to Randy after 22 years on how great his talent is that we don't forget him. We'll never forget him."

Rhoads' bust was set in a wall next to another rock guitar hero, Jimi Hendrix.

Barely into his 20s, Rhoads left the hard rock band Quiet Riot in 1979 and joined Osbourne, who was forming a group after leaving his former band, Black Sabbath.

Rhoads' guitar prowess, particularly his solos, was compared to a fusion of classical, heavy metal and blues. During his time as Osbourne's guitarist, he recorded the albums "The Blizzard Of Ozz," and "Diary Of A Madman."

The dedication was timed to the 22nd anniversary of Rhoads' last public performance. He died in a 1982 plane crash in Florida at 25.



Britney Spears performs Thursday March 18, 2004, at the Mark of the Quad Cities in Moline, Ill. AP

Paris Hilton hurt in show taping

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Paris Hilton was hospitalized Friday after a horse she was riding threw her off and kicked her in the stomach during the taping of "The Simple Life 2," a reality show featuring the hotel heiress and a friend on a 30-day cross-country trip.

Hilton, 23, was first treated at the scene in rural Florida north of Tampa, then taken to a hospital, said Chris Alexander, publicist for 20th Century Fox in Los Angeles.

The kick to the stomach left her bruised, but she was not seriously injured, said St. Joseph's Hospital spokeswoman Lisa Patterson. Hilton was released about three hours after she was brought in and was never admitted to the hospital, she said.



Paris Hilton presents an outfit by Brazilian designer Colcci during the 2004 Rio Fashion Autumn/Winter collections in Rio de Janeiro, in this Jan. 23, 2004 file photo. AP

Hilton was able to walk around immediately after the accident, Alexander said.

Camera crews were taping

the socialite-turned-TV star when she was thrown, Alexander said.

The sequel to "The Simple Life" features Hilton and Nicole Richie on a month-long cross-country trip with no money, credit cards, cell phones or boyfriends. The show is set to hit Fox in June.

Hilton, the leggy blonde hotel heiress, and Richie, daughter of singer Lionel Richie, helped make the first season of "The Simple Life" a huge success for Fox.

The young women appeared to break free from their sheltered upbringings, working odd jobs milking cows and hawking burgers at a fast-food restaurant while living with a family in ultra-rural Altus, Ark., population 817.

Former President Bush to skydive

DALLAS (AP)—Former President George Bush hasn't had enough air time yet. For his 80th birthday, he's planning his third skydiving feat since 1997 - and fourth jump ever.

The ex-president also plans a party in College Station on June 12 (his birthday) and June 13 so friends and admirers can watch the next leap. Tickets will be sold, with prices beginning at \$100 and the proceeds going to charity.

A Navy pilot during World War II, Bush made a jump at age 72, fulfilling a promise he made after bailing from a crippled plane during the military conflict. He'd vowed to skydive again just for fun.

In 1999, Bush marked his



Helpers await former President George H. W. Bush as he lands after a parachute jump on June 9, 1999, in College Station, Texas. Bush, who jumped as part of a celebration for his 75th birthday, landed near his presidential library and museum. AP

75th birthday by jumping from an airplane.

"Clearly, after his first jump, I think he was hooked," Chris Needels, executive director of the U.S. Parachute Association and staff member on Bush's National Security Council, told The Dallas Morning News for Friday's editions.

Bush was decorated for heroism after his plane was shot down over the Pacific Ocean during World War II. That was also his first jump - into the Pacific Ocean on Sept. 2, 1944, when he bailed out of his torpedo bomber after it was disabled by Japanese fire.

Needels said an 86-year-old member in his group has made 100 jumps a year.

Parents grapple with promise to let daughter get pierced

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN

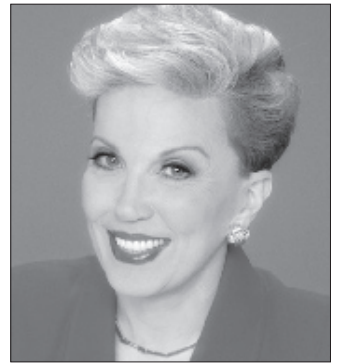
DEAR ABBY: Our otherwise responsible 15-year-old daughter, "Marie," is upset with her father and me because we won't allow her to have her belly button pierced. She's a good kid, and we originally told her she could get it pierced if she improved her grades. However, after thinking it over, we changed our minds and told her so.

Marie couldn't believe we'd changed our minds. She worked hard and brought her grades up to A's and B's.

Now she is in tears because we won't let her have the piercing.

At what age do you and your readers consider belly button piercing appropriate?

UPSET IN COLLEGEVILLE, PA.



Dear Abby

DEAR UPSET: I see navel piercing as a fad that has gone mainstream. Discuss it with your family physician or a dermatologist to determine what the risks are. Be sure your daughter is present so she is aware of them, too. (As long as the procedure is done hygienically, it shouldn't cause any damage.) And in the future, I advise you to think carefully before making any more promises to your daughter.

DEAR ABBY: I am getting married in August. My best friend, "Judy," is my maid of honor. My problem is she expects me to invite her fiancé, "Joe," to the wedding.

While I love Judy dearly, I do not care for her fiancé. When they are together, they keep to themselves and barely interact with other people.

I'm afraid if I invite Joe to my wedding, she'll spend most of her time with him. He has never done anything to make me dislike him, but I've never had a good feeling about him since the day I met him. I want to keep my friend happy, but I also want to have the wedding of my dreams. I'm worried if I invite Joe it will put a damper on my day, and if I don't invite him, Judy will be hurt. Is it OK not to invite him?

BRIDE-TO-BE

DEAR BRIDE-TO-BE: No, it's not OK. To exclude your friend's fiancé would be selfish and a breach of etiquette. They are officially a couple, and besides, on your wedding day you will be so busy with your guests and your new husband that you won't have time to dwell on the amount of attention you'll be receiving from your maid of honor.

DEAR ABBY: I enjoy the letters you print about acts of kindness. I am a 63-year-old woman with physical disabilities. While walking out of the grocery store, I slipped on some ice and fell. Abby, four people walked right past me without even offering to help. A Muslim family walked by, and the husband put his groceries down and helped me up. He then carried my groceries while his wife and son helped me to my car. After that, they followed my car to my house to make sure I arrived safely. Their son helped me unload the groceries and get them into my kitchen.

In all the chaos, I didn't even get their names. Please, Abby, let them know how grateful I am. So many ugly things have been said about Muslims since Sept. 11. Their kindness and concern reminded me that there are many good people out there, and we should not forget that.

GRATEFUL IN ST. PAUL

DEAR GRATEFUL: You're right. We shouldn't. Kindness and consideration for others aren't virtues confined by borders, nor are they restricted to one religion. Thank you for pointing it out.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Woods hits pothole, trails Maruyama by 9

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Tiger Woods' drive for five at the Bay Hill Invitational took a major detour Friday.

Trying to become the first player in history to win the same tournament five years in a row, Woods was out of bounds and in the trees on his way to a 2-over 74, which left him nine shots behind Shigeki Maruyama and needing to match his greatest 36-hole comeback to keep the streak alive.

"I just need to play well and put myself in position where I can give it a run on Sunday," Woods said. "If the leaders play well, hats off to them. I just need to take care of my own business."

As surprising as it was to see Woods so far down the leaderboard, it was equally stunning to see Maruyama playing like he owns this course.

In 10 previous rounds at Bay

Hill, the Japanese star had never broken 70. Despite a three-putt bogey to end his round, Maruyama still piled up enough birdies for his second straight 66, giving him a two-shot lead over Darren Clarke, Chad Campbell and Stuart Appleby.

Maruyama was among the 36-hole leaders at Torrey Pines four years ago when Woods was trying to win his seventh consecutive PGA Tour event. Asked then if he could end the streak, Maruyama smiled and said, "No chance."

He and Woods wound up in a tie for second behind Phil Mickelson that year.

On Friday, Maruyama again showed deference when asked if he was the guy to end Woods' streak at Bay Hill.

"Very difficult question," he said with a smile. "Maybe eight shots from Tiger Woods after the third round, I would have a good chance."

Woods might be the least of Maruyama's worries.

Clarke had a chance to share

the lead when he had a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole, but he three-putted for bogey, dropping him to a 68. It took him a while to cool off, but Clarke saw the big picture.

"I'm only two shots back going into the weekend, which is not bad," he said.

Appleby holed a 30-foot birdie putt on his final hole, No. 9, for a 67.

Campbell could be the man to watch on the weekend.

A rock-solid Texan and one of the rising stars on the PGA Tour, he has kept mistakes to a minimum. Campbell escaped serious trouble on the first hole, making a 6-footer for bogey, but he chipped in for birdie on the par-3 second hole for the second straight day and finished with a 68.

Again, the loudest cheers were for his partner—Arnold Palmer, who can still put on a show.

The 74-year-old tournament host, likely playing in his last Bay Hill Invitational, hit driver from the fairway on No. 18 and

Shigeki Maruyama, of Japan, lines up his putt on the ninth hole during the second round of the Bay Hill Invitational in Orlando, Fla., Friday, March 19, 2004.

AP

chased it up the green to about 30 feet. He got his par for a 79, the first time he has broken 80 at his tournament in three years.

"He's still got some game," Campbell said.

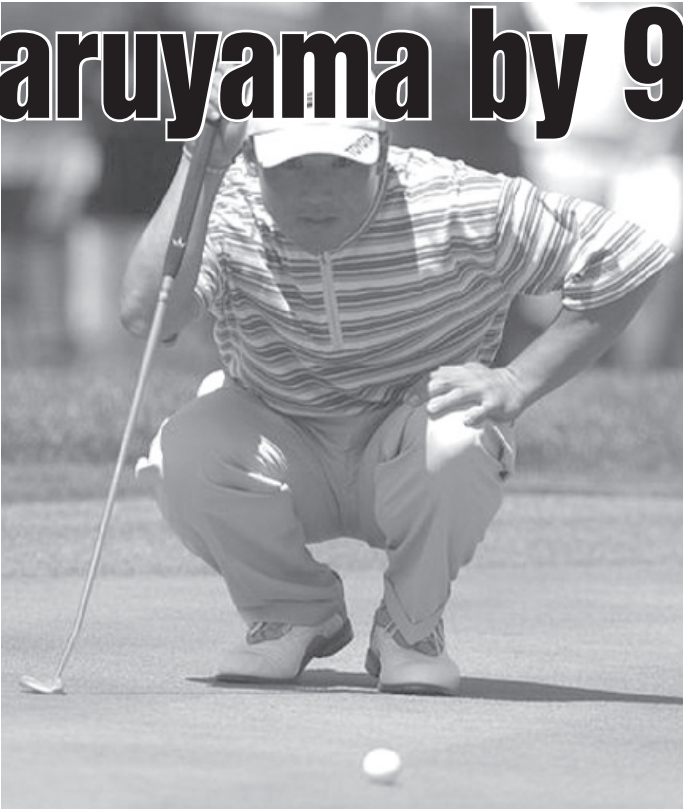
While it was a treat to play with the King for two days, nothing beats posing with him Sunday when Palmer hands over the trophy and the \$900,000 check.

"That would be awesome," Campbell said. "But I've got a lot of work ahead of me. I would like the opportunity to be there."

Several guys won't have that chance.

No one has their work cut out for them quite like Woods.

Maruyama was already done with his 66 when Woods teed off, and it was as clear as the blue skies over Bay Hill that scoring conditions again were benign.



Sorenstam takes lead at Safeway

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Ariz. (AP)—Annika Sorenstam is in the lead in her first LPGA Tour start of the year, already exhibiting the skills that have made her the best female golfer in the world.

And 14-year-old Michelle Wie's 5-under 67 on Friday showed why so many believe she is the heir apparent.

Sorenstam shot a methodical 7-under 65 in the second round to take a one-stroke lead halfway through the

Safeway International.

She was at 12-under 132, just ahead of Cristie Kerr, who matched her career best with a 9-under 63.

"It could have been lower," Kerr said. "I had a couple of putts slip out."

Still, Kerr called it "a ridiculously good day."

Defending champion Se Ri Pak (68) was three back at 9-under 135. First-round leader Kim Saiki shot a 73 to drop five shots back at 7-under 137.

"I'm playing really good," said Sorenstam, the ANZ Masters winner three weeks ago in Australia in her only other tournament of the year.

"I'm playing smart and giving myself good opportunities. If I hit a good drive I'm playing aggressive. If I hit it poorly off the tee I play it conservatively. And the greens are so smooth. Once I see the line and hit it right there, it seems like they go in."

The buzz through the big

galleries surrounded Wie, the 6-foot teen sensation who was seven back at 5-under 139.

Wie had eight birdies and three bogeys in the 90-plus degree sunshine of the Superstition Mountain Golf club 50 miles east of downtown Phoenix.

"I don't think I hit my shots as good as I did yesterday," Wie said, "but my putting definitely was a lot better. Those bogeys I made were pretty stupid. I felt really bad about those, but I made a lot of birdies."

Red Sox will have to reshuffle lineup

The Boston Red Sox will have to reshuffle their lineup for a while after finding out Friday that Trot Nixon will be out until May and Nomar Garciaparra might miss opening day.

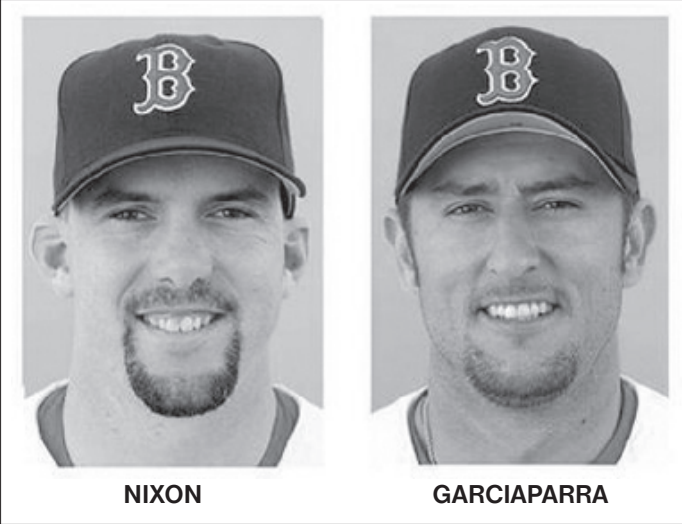
Nixon is sidelined because of a mildly herniated disc in his back. He has not played at all in spring training.

Garciaparra had an MRI exam that showed mild tendinitis in his right Achilles' tendon.

The Red Sox hope Garciaparra can play in a game in two weeks, coming very close to Boston's opener in Baltimore on April 4. General manager Theo Epstein was optimistic after tests indicated both should fully recover.

"Nomar will be back by opening day and Trot will be back some time in early May and we can withstand that," Epstein said. "They're both being treated conservatively."

Manager Terry Francona plans to use Gabe Kapler and Kevin Millar, the regular first baseman,



Boston's Trot Nixon will be sidelined until May with a back injury and Red Sox teammate Nomar Garciaparra could miss opening day because of a foot problem.

in right field until Nixon returns. If Garciaparra isn't ready by opening day, second baseman Pokey Reese will play shortstop.

David Ortiz, Boston's designated hitter, figures to see more time at first base, which could provide more at-bats for DH Ellis Burks. Mark Bellhorn is the primary backup infielder.

Garciaparra had a removable boot on his right foot Friday that ended about six inches below the knee. The device immobilizes the area.

"I still plan on being there opening day," he said. "The good thing is it's happening now and not in the middle of the season."

The MRI showed no injury to the tendon or the bone, but the inflammation is in an area that is slow to heal, Garciaparra said.

Garciaparra is 0-for-8 in spring training. He went 0-for-2 with a walk in the last game he played on Wednesday, a 3-1 win over Cleveland.

"It was feeling all right and it obviously showed that it wasn't ready," he said. "It just got aggravated even more."

Elsewhere, players' union head Donald Fehr said he never expected commissioner Bud Selig would try to immediately implement tougher testing policies and punishments related to steroid use.

There had been speculation Selig might use his "best interests of the game" powers to modify the steroid policies in the existing labor agreement between players and owners.

"I don't think it was ever seriously considered. I never treated it seriously," Fehr said after visiting Cleveland players at Winter Haven, Fla.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	41	27	.603	—
New York	32	37	.464	9 1-2
Miami	31	37	.456	10
Boston	31	39	.443	11
Philadelphia	28	41	.406	13 1-2
Washington	22	46	.324	19
Orlando	19	51	.271	23

Central Division

x-Indiana	50	18	.735	—
x-Detroit	45	25	.643	6
New Orleans	36	33	.522	14 1-2
Milwaukee	34	33	.507	15 1-2
Cleveland	31	37	.456	19
Toronto	29	39	.426	21
Atlanta	22	47	.319	28 1-2
Chicago	19	49	.279	31

Western Conference

Midwest Division

Minnesota	47	22	.681	—
San Antonio	45	24	.652	2
Dallas	43	25	.632	3 1-2
Memphis	42	26	.618	4 1-2
Houston	39	28	.582	7
Denver	36	34	.514	11 1-2
Utah	35	34	.507	12

Pacific Division

x-Sacramento	50	19	.725	—
L.A. Lakers	46	23	.667	4
Portland	34	34	.500	15 1-2
Seattle	31	38	.449	19
Golden State	28	40	.412	21 1-2
L.A. Clippers	27	42	.391	23
Phoenix	22	47	.319	28

x-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Games

Chicago 96, Toronto 91
Washington 94, Atlanta 84
Utah 97, Cleveland 88
Sacramento 94, Indiana 92
New York 79, New Jersey 65
Detroit 94, Denver 75
Dallas 120, Boston 104
Seattle 91, New Orleans 80
Minnesota 93, Phoenix 80
Golden State 90, Houston 84
L.A. Lakers 106, L.A. Clippers 100

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB

ANAHEIM ANGELS-Reassigned RHP Steve Andrade, RHP Steve Green, RHP Bobby Jenks and C Jeff Mathis to their minor league camp.
BALTIMORE ORIOLES-Optioned RHP Eddy Rodriguez, RHP John Stephens and LHP Brian Forystek to Ottawa of the IL and RHP David Crouthers to Bowie of the Eastern League.
BOSTON RED SOX-Optioned RHP Edwin Almonte, LHP Phil Seibel and INF Kevin Youkilis to Pawtucket of the IL and RHP Jerome Gamble to Portland of the Eastern League. Assigned LHP Nick Bierbrodt outright to Pawtucket. Assigned OF Jeremy Owens and C

Kelly Shoppach to their minor league camp.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX-Announced the resignation of Joe Nossek, bench coach.
CLEVELAND INDIANS-Optioned RHP Fernando Cabrera, INF Jhonny Peralta, INF Brandon Phillips, OF Grady Sizemore to Buffalo of the IL. Assigned RHP Kazuhito Tadano, C Victor Valencia, LHP Tim Young to their minor league camp.

NFL

TEXAS RANGERS-Optioned RHP Juan Dominguez and OF Ramon Nivar to Oklahoma of the IL. Assigned RHP Billy Sylvester, RHP John Wasdin, LHP Mike Bacsik, INF David Newhan and OF Jason Jones to their minor league camp.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS-Optioned RHP Jason Arnold, RHP Dustin McGowan, C Guillermo Quiroz, INF Jorge Sequea, OF Gabe Cross and OF Alexis Rios to Syracuse of the IL and RHP Francisco Rosario to Dunedin of the Florida State League. Assigned RHP Jayson Durocher to their minor league camp.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS-Optioned RHP Mike Adams, LHP Jorge De La Rosa and RHP Ben Hendrickson to Indianapolis of the IL.
MONTREAL EXPOS-Optioned RHP Roy Corcoran, OF Ryan Church, OF Brandon Watson to Edmonton of the PCL and SS Josh Labandeira to Harrisburg of the Eastern League. Assigned RHP Pat Mahomes, RHP Mike Judd, RHP Christian Parker, 1B Larry Broadway and C Josh McKinley to their minor league camp.

NBA

CHICAGO BULLS-Signed F Linton Johnson III to a contract for the remainder of the season.
LOS ANGELES LAKERS-Placed F-C Horace Grant on the injured list.

NFL

ATLANTA FALCONS-Re-signed LB Artie Ulmer.
CHICAGO BEARS-Released QB Chris Chandler.
DENVER BRONCOS-Signed TE Jed Weaver. Re-signed RB Reuben Droughns.
HOUSTON TEXANS-Signed KR J.J. Moses.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS-Agreed to terms with TE Jermaine Wiggins.

College

FERRUM-Fired Ed Willis, men's basketball coach and men's and women's cross country coach.
INDIANA STATE-Announced C Ted Morris has left the basketball team and will transfer to another school.
KANSAS STATE-Signed Jim Wooldridge, men's basketball coach, to a two-year contract extension.
LOUISIANA-MONROE-Announced the resignation of Bruce Hanks, athletics director.

The Associated Press

The Week in Sports

Youth basketball, tennis get going

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY MARK RABAGO
AND SHAN SEMAN, REPORTERS

It was a week of openings, as the 2004 Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League got going and the 1st Annual Toyota Tennis Tournament kicked off.

Last Monday, the IVYBL held an opening ceremony at the Garapan Basketball Court with 12 teams participating in this year's 14-and-under basketball season.

Among the teams battling for the 2004 championship are defending champions Chalan Kanoa Saints, 2003 runner-up Garapan Rollers I, G-Rollers II, Koblerville, Afetnas 69ers, San Antonio Sixers, Chalan Kanoa Kings, Garapan Local Boyz, Matansa Lil Sparks, Manhoben Spiders, Capitol Hill Blaze I and II.

Two days later, the Toyota tennis tournament unfurled at the American Memorial Park tennis courts with more than 80 players signing up for the week's doubles competition.

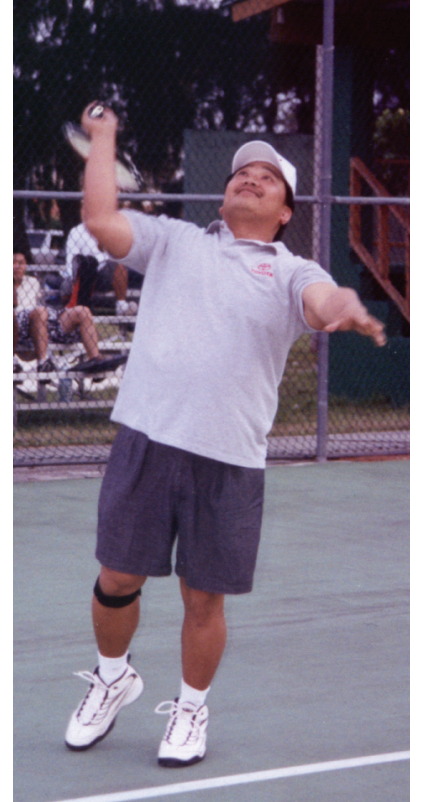
Microl service and body shop manager Abner Venus was on hand to make a short speech and even made the ceremonial first service of the tournament. The singles and mixed competition of the tourney organized by the Saipan Tennis Association kicks off this week.



Teams gather for the IVYBL opening ceremony.



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Juan L. Babauta gives some words of encouragement during the opening ceremony of the 2004 Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League at the Garapan Court. To his left are Division of Sports and Recreation Director Tony Rogolifo and Saipan Mayor Juan Tudela.



Toyota service and body shop manager Abner Venus does the ceremonial service during the opening of the 1st Annual Toyota Tennis Tournament last Wednesday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.



Eli Aughenbaugh of the Pirates gets into his defensive position while at shortstop during Sunday's bout against the Bombers. Aughenbaugh leads the SLLB Major Division with a 0.55 earned run average and ranks among the leaders in batting and several offensive departments.



Dane Lisua of the Church's Bombers focuses while at the plate during last Sunday's Saipan Little League Baseball major Division match against the Pacifica Pirates at the Susupe Softball Field.



Dado Vistal of Verizon maneuvers his way during last Saturday's 40-and-Over Masters Basketball League action against the Chalan Kanoa Legends at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.



Tan Holdings Corp.'s Jessie Nicdao goes up for two in the game against sister team Dai-Ichi last Tuesday in the Mobil league. Dai-Ichi got the better of the match-up 84-69.

Robert Talavera shows off his earnings after finishing second place in the high average race of the Wednesday Night Mixed League. Looking on is high average winner Mark Halstead.



Donn Dunlop and his partner Jack McClure during a break in their men's doubles 5.0 division match last Wednesday.



Tuesday Handicap 8-Ball Fun Tournament winner Victor Hocog, second from right, is flanked by, from left, third place Roger Espiritu, runner-up Ning Copeland and PTC's Mike Babauta.



Cincinnati beats East Tennessee, 80-77

Tony Bobbitt hit a 3 from the left corner with 16.1 seconds left Friday, rallying fourth-seeded Cincinnati to an 80-77 victory over a team that keeps coming up just short in the NCAA tournament.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Youth basketball, tennis get going

It was a week of openings, as the 2004 Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League got going and the 1st Annual Toyota Tennis Tournament kicked off.

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28 SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2004

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Mr. Rugby also has his soft spot

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER

Almost all athletes in the CNMI dream of making it to the professional level at least once in their lifetime. Getting there twice is just too good to believe.

That's the road that former United States Air Force Select National Rugby player Stanley Iakopo is currently taking as he heads back for another tryout to defend the slot that he's occupied for the past season.

"Every year each slot in the team is up for grabs," he said. "That means I have to go back if I want to continue to play at that level."

While Iakopo has been out of action since the end of last season, he stressed that he has tried to keep himself in the best shape possible by competing under the Budweiser Predators' flag in the Commonwealth Football League as a running back. Last year, he was recognized as co-MVP after leading the Predators to the championship.

Iakopo, who in the past also competed in the Guam Football League, added that there is a possibility he will again be participating in the Guam league.

"I was given an invitation to go back and play again for the Miller Bears," he said. "I've done it before and was pretty successful. I would fly to Guam almost every weekend...all expenses were paid by the team, so that was cool and I wouldn't mind doing it again. I love the competition."

The buffed up athlete, however, stated that though many may get intimidated by his physical strength and speed on the field, he believes the most precious aspect of his performance is his heart and mind.

"It's what keeps this engine running," he said. "Before I get on the field, my adrenaline is already running in high gear and my mind just clicks.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Iakopo, third row extreme right, poses with his teammates in the U.S. Air Force Select National Rugby team.



Stanley Iakopo in an undated photo after a game.



Iakopo goes up the field for a score.

Rugby is a rough and tough sport. You can get hurt and injured in a really bad way, so all I think about is putting down the players in the other team. If I

don't do it, then they'll do it to me. I have to make my move. Friendship and things like that, when I step on the field, it's not even on my mind. During

the game, the only ones I call friends are the guys on my team," he said.

After the game or off the field, though, Iakopo stresses that his personality is totally different.

"I'm just like that on the field," he said. "It's part of every one who enjoys competing. After the game, everything is cool."

Iakopo also wanted to recognize a special person who according to him, shaped him into who he is today.

"I owe everything to my grandmother," he said. "She raised me, taught me values, and even though she isn't here physically, I still think of her a lot. I still remember everything she's done for me. She's played a huge role in my life, and I know a lot of people have assisted me along the way, but my grandmother is just unmatched," he said with teary eyes.

In a message to all the young athletes of the CNMI, Iakopo said that he hopes the youngsters would try hard and keep reaching for their dreams.

"Anything is possible," he said. "Don't matter if you're from the islands, but with a lot of hard work, sweat, and more hard work, dreams can come true...no matter what sport. If it's in rugby, I know how hard it is, but it will be all worth the work."

Iakopo graduated from the University of Hawaii in Manoa. He majored in Speech Pathology and Audiology. While in Hawaii, he played for the Honolulu Chiefs and was recognized and given an invitation to his first try out.

He also suited up for the Saipan Rugby Football Club, playing with the team for six years before relocating to Hawaii.